

(Washington, DC)— Yesterday, U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Milwaukee) wrote to the acting director of the ATF regarding the bureau's oversight of Badger Guns.

The full text of her letter follows:

Deputy Director Melson

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives 99 New York Avenue, NE Suite 55100

Washington, DC 20226

Dear Deputy Director Melson,

On January 3rd the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported on the current licensure status of a gun dealership in my district. In 2006, federal investigators with ATF recommended that the gun dealership license for Badger Outdoors be revoked. Unfortunately, before the process was completed, the owner gave up the store and opened a property management business. His co-owner's 28 year-old son and former Badger Outdoor employee, Adam Allan, became the business's new owner despite his lack of business experience. Mr. Allan then took out a new dealership license under the name Badger Guns. He now pays rent to the store's first owner, and employs his father and former boss as a staffer at Badger Guns.

Even though the same two principals remain involved in the day-to-day operations of Badger Guns, the revocation process has been halted because ATF claims it cannot use the violations of Badger Outdoors in a case against Badger Guns.

According to your own agency, Badger Outdoors, and now Badger Guns, has sold a vast majority of the weapons used in gun-related crimes in Southeastern Wisconsin over the past decade. Six of Milwaukee's police officers have been shot on the job in the past two years – all six were shot with guns purchased from this father and son duo. Further, an ongoing investigation by the Milwaukee Police Department has found that of those interviewed after leaving the store, 1 in 5 were felons, many were illegally target shooting, and customers were engaged in straw-buying to pass on newly purchased weapons to people not legally allowed to own them. I fully support the second amendment rights of eligible citizens to buy and own guns; however, the second amendment does not protect irresponsible gun dealerships that willingly turn a blind eye when selling weapons to dangerous convicted felons.

I have several questions regarding the oversight of Badger Guns, as well as the regulatory limitations of ATF.

First, in the case of Badger Guns, what is ATF doing to ensure that paper-pushing does not endanger the lives of constituents and law enforcement in my district? To what extent are you

working with other agencies, including the IRS and local property taxing authorities, to determine if there are other violations that can put pressure on this store? What additional evidence does ATF need in order to close the dealership?

Second, how can the federal government ensure that merely shifting the title of “owner” among a few people is not an adequate defense when gun dealers break the law? As ATF knows, the paperwork techniques used by Badger Guns is not an isolated incident. The former owner of Bulls Eye Shooting Supply in Tacoma, Washington had his license revoked after selling a rifle to the DC sniper and misplacing paperwork on hundreds of weapons sold from his store - but he continues to collect rent on the gun store that his friend now owns. What resources does ATF need to ensure that dealerships close when they engage in reckless behavior, instead of transferring titles among a small group of people?

It is obvious that Badger Guns continues to willfully break the law --- local police departments know it, citizens of my district know it, and most importantly, ATF seems to know it. Yet, for some inconceivable reason, these individuals have been able to evade federal and local officials in plain sight by simply shuffling management titles and property ownership papers. It is in everyone’s interest to ensure that gun dealers abide by the law, both in my district and states across the country. If it is a matter of having sufficient authority to revoke irresponsible licenses or impose fines please detail what additional authority ATF needs to close bad actors. I want to ensure that the ATF has the statutory and regulatory resources to accomplish this goal.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Gwen Moore

MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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For an interview with Congresswoman Gwen Moore, please contact David Frey at 202-225-4572.